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ABSTRACT

Inservice training sessions were provided for teachers from elementary to high school level on the topic of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and its application to instruction and curriculum. In the training, participants experience, plan, and reflect on the intelligences and their uses in their lives and their classrooms. The training follows a four-step model developed by David Lazear which involves awakening, amplifying, teaching, and transferring intelligences. In awakening, the intelligence is engaged; amplifying allows for that intelligence to gain strength; teaching uses that intelligence to learn material; and transferring helps enable the person to understand the intelligences and how they might be utilized and integrated into daily learning and activities. The training sessions have been rated very positively by participants, and participants believed unanimously that the multiple intelligences material would help them do a better job of teaching and/or supervising staff. It is felt that making use of multiple intelligences can help in restructuring classrooms into places where everyone can have a higher degree of success. (JDD)

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Building a New Paradigm: A Staff Development Program That is Seeking to Reach Each Child's Potential Through Knowing and Using the Seven Intelligences.

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Jonathan struggled with the material, often giving up and staring out the window. Yet, when recess began, Jonathan proved himself to be a leader. He negotiated settlements, avoided extended conflict, and seemed to be the glue holding teams together. Yet the teacher demanded that he should be tested and placed in a special class.

Sheliah came to school every day with drawings and loved to share them with her classmates. She rarely did any written homework. The teacher wanted her in a remedial class for language development.

These are two isolated cases that did not become part of the statistics in education. But like those statistics, they represent a crisis in education. In a recent story, Primetime, the ABC-TV news magazine, quoted a teacher as stating that the education system was in a "Meltdown."(1992) He was referring to the state of

education in most of the schools in the U.S. This situation is not news for those of us involved in education. That includes almost every person in the United States. From different perspectives we have come to understand the horror of students failing to learn. From that vantage the authors of this article have come together and have begun to see an answer in reaching for the fullest learning for each student and learner. The answer weaves together various theories and ideas but at the center it holds that each person can learn. Further, it holds that using his/her individual strengths will enable that learning to occur. Most importantly, those strengths are developed in a combination of learning and thinking styles best represented in the multi-intelligences theory of Howard Gardner(1983) together with the practical work of David Lazear.(1991,1991b)

With these beliefs as a foundation there does seem to be hope. In this article we describe our journey and some of the practices which came to be part of our training seminars. We will review the history and describe the training. In the last section we will discuss the future of this training program and present our hopes to validate its effectiveness.

The History

In the summer of 1991 we met at a workshop in Vancouver, B.C., entitled, "Preparing the Learner for the Year 2000." Both of us had chosen the sessions which focused on the use of multiple intelligences to more effectively teach our students. We discovered we lived and worked relatively close to one another and were both excited about the possibilities of the use of multiple intelligence theory to better equip teachers to work with students. We parted from that workshop agreeing to get in touch with one another if we found opportunities when we might work together.

Through a Chapter 2 Grant, Northwest Local Schools has established a very effective after school inservice program. The focus is on improving instruction. More than 125 of the teachers and administrators have received training in the Madeline Hunter model (Mastery Teaching) during the past two years. These classes have been on a voluntary basis for the Northwest teaching staff. Last year Math Strategies was added to meet standards in the Ohio Math Model, and Cooperative Learning was added because so many teachers expressed interest in this strategy.

When Beverly returned from Vancouver, she was so enthusiastic about multiple intelligences that an interest survey was taken. Subsequently this area was added to the Chapter 2 proposal. Because a more select group was

desired for a first attempt at teaching the material, Mastery Teaching became a pre-requisite for the class. When material was sent to these teachers and administrators, 25 of them indicated an interest in enrolling.

At this point, Ron was contacted and agreed to join Beverly in teaching this class. There were 17 teachers and administrators at our first session. Sixteen of them finished the 6 week course. The composition of the class was quite varied. There were 6 high school teachers, (English, math, music, foreign language, cosmetology and industrial arts), 6 elementary teachers, (kindergarten, third grade, fifth grade, art, music, and Learning Disabled), one middle school principal, the middle school supervisor, the gifted supervisor, and the intermediate supervisor.

Howard Gardner has given us an innovative, provocative, and powerful theory to digest. David Lazear, among others, has presented this theory on a more practical level making it more useful and, therefore, effective in the hands of the classroom teacher. While there are similarities to the Learning Styles of Rita Dunn (1982) and to the Style Delineator of Anthony Gregorc (1982), the application to the classroom seems clearer and more practical. With the hope that we could provide training that builds on the strengths of the participants and gives them a practical experience with the use of the

multiple learning style theory, we began the training at Northwest School District.

Description of the training

The theory of Multiple Intelligences was introduced by Howard Gardner(1983). Through his research in Project Zero at Harvard University, new ways of identifying and understanding human intelligence have emerged. No longer considered a fixed state, intelligence can be enhanced and amplified. Not only can it change, it can also be taught to others. There is not just one way to be smart. Rather, intelligence is a multiple reality which occurs in different parts of the brain/mind system. While the intellect is pluralistic, at some level, it is one. Improvement in any of the areas of the brain will in some way effect the others. The theory breaks through the wall and sees each person with an unique combination of intelligences which makes that person uniquely smart. The question now becomes, as state on Primetime(1992), "Not, are you smart, but how are you smart?"

Based on the work of Gardner and especially the work and experience with David Lazear(1991), we grounded our work with this theory in curriculum and instruction and upon our own wealth of experiences in the classroom. The training gives an overview and some theory about each of

the identified intelligences. The key, however, is that it is also very experiential and asks the participants to reflect on those experiences.

There are seven intelligences identified so far in Gardner's research. They include Verbal/Linguistic, which is responsible for production of both oral and written language; Logical/Mathematical, associated with scientific thinking and inductive thought processes. These are the two most commonly recognized in schools. They are joined by: Visual /Spatial, which deals with visual arts, architecture, and the use of space and knowing how to get around it; Body/Kinesthetic, the ability to use the body to express emotion, play a game, or create a new product; Musical/Rhythmic, which includes recognition of rhythmic and tonal patterns and sensitivity to sounds from environment, the human voice, and musical instruments; Interpersonal, which involves the ability to work cooperatively and to communicate effectively with others; Intrapersonal, which is the knowledge of self, enabling one to look internally at emotional responses and metacognition with a sense of self reflection and intuition. Each intelligence is a way of knowing and learning can occur through each of these vehicles. The goal is to honor each and use all for the learning at hand.

Making use of these multiple intelligences can help us in restructuring our classrooms into places where everyone

can have a higher degree of success than ever imagined. It enables the learner to understand and develop there unique way of understanding and this empowers that person with a greater self esteem and enthusiasm. This theory can help each of us build upon both our strong and weak intelligences to become a more whole, happy and productive human being. Lazear(1991, 1991b), a pioneer in the application of Multiple Intelligences Theory , uses awakening, amplifying, teaching and transferring intelligences as a four step model to create and use each of these intelligences. In awakening the intelligence is engaged, amplifying allows for that intelligence to gain strength, teaching uses that intelligence to learn material and transferring helps enable the person to understand the intelligences and how they might be utilized and integrated into daily learning and activities. The training program we use follows this model.

We have expanded the training and have been asked to do more than the original. However, in whatever various form or process we use, we meet with the participants and give an overview of the theory. The key, then, is that there are many activities and experiences which explore each of the intelligences. We have found more positive reactions when this is done over time, allowing at least a week between each experience and intelligence. In any case, we have the participants using, experiencing,

planning and reflecting on the intelligences and their uses in their lives and their classroom. For the past two years we have been sharing the multiple intelligences theory and application with the teachers and administrators at Northwest Local Schools in Cincinnati, and with other school systems. We have been invited to other areas as well and the general feedback has been very positive.

The future

The classes received overwhelming positive evaluations. 96.8% of the original group stated it "was very positive training session." It was the highest rated staff development program in the Northwest School District in several years with 100% of the participants stating that it had practical applications for them. We heard comments such as: "This was one of the best staff development classes. I really think I can use these ideas in my classroom."

As reflected in the final evaluations of the Northwest sessions, the participants believed unanimously that the multiple intelligences material would help them do a better job of teaching and/or supervising staff. The L.D. teacher shared some of her successes in practicing with her special students. The high school English teacher

noted how effective some of the exercises were with his "hard to reach" students. Each of the participants had something positive to share. All participants also felt they knew themselves better after taking the class and experiencing various ways of knowing and learning.

Since the first workshop at Northwest, an additional fifty district educators have received inservice in the use of the multiple intelligence theory, most of them through a 20 hour workshop with David Lazear. An additional 450 teachers have been through an awareness session led by Lazear. The surrounding districts are expressing interest. Workshops have been done through the Hamilton County Board of Education Association which encompasses 22 school districts. We continue to hear positive things and are being asked to assist various districts in this process of restructuring through the employment of multiple intelligences. Presently we are working with Western Wayne Schools in Indiana.

The most difficult problem is implementing the theory. Bringing about change is never easy. Looking at students in different ways, and using the multitude of new methods available to teach is both challenging and threatening to those who are in a rut and want to stay there. The teachers who have been through these training sessions all ask how can we implement this. Our answer is simple, start in your classroom. Go for some small wins and remember that all change begins with a few people coming

together.

We are in the process of expanding this training and have done work in a few places. David Lazear is busy spreading the word and there are others around the country very active in this theory. Both authors are committed to this theory as a most effective tool. Bev is actively using the theory in her work with staff development at Northwest Schools, as well as giving orientations in Ohio universities and other school districts. Ron is using the theory in his work as director of the undergraduate teacher education program and in his work in the education and psychology graduate programs at Marist College, as well as his work with various school districts. We continue to come together to work as a team collaboratively presenting this critical material.

Our goal was to open eyes, to have teachers experience the joy of using their own strengths, to become aware of the wonderful power of the brain when the multiple intelligence theory is applied to classroom practices. We have heard great stories and have case reports which suggest that the work is effective in increasing learning and attention to learning. We are in the process of doing a more systematic survey and data collection to see if the change is long lasting and if there is any positive correlation to increased learning.

Conclusion

We are in a real struggle in American Education. In our classrooms and in our experience with teachers in many different settings we have heard the cry. How do we reach the students? From the rural back woods to the inner city, the good and caring teachers are faced with the day to day realities of "the meltdown"(Primetime,1992). Means of reaching all students must be shared and practiced if we are to bring the fruits of an effective education to all students Such success is essential to revive the confidence of the public in our education system.

Our students deserve the opportunity to succeed, and teachers and administrators must make the necessary changes to insure that success. This is happening on a small scale at Northwest, with the ripple affect we see a hopeful possibility. It is evident to us that Multiple Intelligence Theory can play an important role in the restructuring movement, but true success will come only when all of us are willing to build a new paradigm. That paradigm recognizes the differing intelligences of our students, and stimulates the restructuring of the classrooms accordingly.

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